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Sweet Peas,

An Idyl of

Memory,

Love,

and Hope.

Sweet Peas.

—BY—

L. H. M.

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And now, the fashion of the hour,
They tell me, claims these dear Sweet Peas,
To deck and perfume Beauty's bower:—
For me,—with close and subtle power,
Their tendrils bind SWEET MEMORIES.

A child again,—kind friends to greet,
With childhood's joy I skip and run,
Beneath the towering elms that meet,
Arching across the old South Street,
Flecked by the breeze with shade and sun.

I swing again the little gate,
Stand at the quaint, divided door;
The plump, red robin and his mate,
Hop in the pathway as I wait
The old brass knocker sounds once more.

Remote from turmoil, strife and din,
A hundred years this house hath stood:
A hundred years my near of kin,
Have dwelt its peaceful walls within,
And with life's evil found its good.

My great grand-parents lived and died,
Here in the days that long have flown:
Grand-father's house was close beside,
Garden and meadow, pastures wide,
And fruitful orchards touched his own.

Here, free from city home and school,
We children came in search of health,
And found it in these breezes cool;
Grand-father lightly held the rule,
And let us find out Nature's wealth.

We crossed the river on the pole,
Or waded in its pebbly bed,
Startled the bird and tracked the mole
Or chased the woodchuck to its hole
And plucked the berries black and red.

We bounded o'er the Indian graves,
For so we called the hummocks queer,
And almost saw the stalking braves,
Come up the hill the river laves,—
'Twas half in fun and half in fear.

With branches gathered from the wood,
We built our tents, with brush our fires,—
Then in the ashes baked our food,
And thought it very sweet and good,
Fit for an epicure's desires.

'Twas ALWAYS summer when we came.
ALWAYS, the fresh sweet-scented air.
The hills, the lakes, were just the same;
The skies, the elms now known to fame.
And SWEET PEAS always
blooming there!

But I was standing at the door.
Ere roaming with my thoughts away.
And now, in thought, I greet once more,
That cordial band of three or four,
One *dearest*, at that early day.

Not beautiful, or gay, was she,
Of sensitive impetuous mood,
But full of boundless sympathy,
Her faults hid by her charity,
And those who loved her, understood.

Gifted with true poetic fire,
Spirit and soul of clearest ken,
She led to better things and higher,—
Nor failed she ever to inspire,
A deeper love to God and men.

Within her own low, pleasant room,
Wise, loving questions she would ask,
Of studies, sports, and friends at home,
Or show perhaps some old heir-loom,
Or help me with some dainty task.

And then we sought sweet outer air,
June pinks, and mignonette, and phlox,
All blooming in her garden fair,—
Sweet William, roses every where,
Blue bells, and stately hollyhocks.

Such lavish beauty, sweetness, grace,—
She loved, as I loved, all of these,
The change and growth of each would trace,
And always in my hand would place
These lovely, fragrant, dear Sweet Peas!

To grieve, to gladden, or harass,
The time for me rolled swiftly on,
Her lengthened days did softly pass—
I came and went,—and then—alas!
For her the light of earth was gone!

I saw her in her old arm-chair
At four score years so calm and neat:
One simple band of muslin fair,
Confined her rich, soft, clustering hair,
Her dear plain features were so sweet.

Her books, her work, must round her be,
And these dear flowers with fragrant breath,
She knew the friends she could not see,
And blessed them for their ministry,
And only waited life through death.

I lay my tribute on her grave,—
Happy to know her safe and blest.
Sweet spirit! pious, pure, and brave!
God now gives all that thou canst crave,
Of light and beauty, love and rest!

And thus, these flowers I've called so dear,
With soft strength of a babe's embrace,
Have twined their tendrils far and near
Round things of earth,—and made more clear
Some thoughts of God's most holy place.

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